



Senior Management Team Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on 12 July 2023
 09:00-12:30, Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Nicola Vallance-Ross (NVR)	Head of Corporate Services – Chair
Ezmie McCutcheon (EMc)	Head of Communications
Nick Hobbs (NH)	Head of Advice and Investigations
Judith Chisholm (JC)	Executive Assistant - Minutes

1.	Welcome and apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Gina Wilson, Head of Strategy.	
2.	Review of minutes from previous meeting and actions	
	<p>The minutes of the Senior Management Team meeting held on 14 June 2023 were approved.</p> <p>Review and updates to actions from previous meeting:</p> <p>ACTION– breakdown of Strategy and Advice and Investigations budgets – Finance Officer and Head of Corporate Services to meet with Head of Advice and Investigations and Head of Strategy to agree level of detail which would like reported on in finance reports.</p> <p>ACTION– SMT to meet at end of August to discuss rephasing budget against any revised expected spend for this year.</p> <p>SMT have made decision on Commissioner emails that must be retained. We will retain all former Commissioner’s emails that fall within time period required by the UK and the Scottish COVID Inquiries. Head of Corporate Services has retained HR files required. Any correspondence related to child protection issues are retained on other systems. ACTION: JC to obtain dates for retention period for Covid Inquiries from Legal Officer. All other correspondence outside of this period can be deleted.</p> <p>ACTION – SMT to review and approve Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy by email.</p>	<p>NVR/G W/NH</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>SMT</p>

3.	Finance	
	<p>Finance</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Services noted that no exceptions from anticipated spend to highlight to SMT this month. Finance report will be circulated separately.</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>SMT decided to prepare three budget options together with draft submission letters with narrative to accompany each budget option. SMT will provide the options to the new Commissioner together with SMT's recommendation.</p> <p>ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to prepare three budget options and draft accompanying letter and narrative for SMT to review. SMT will meet to discuss and review the three options and agree its recommendation before the new Commissioner starts.</p> <p>ACTION: JC to arrange meeting of SMT to discuss budget options.</p> <p>Audit</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Services provided a progress update in relation to the audit. We have received final financial statements from external consultant. These were as expected. Last minute adjustments due to accruals. Performance analysis is required no later than 31 July. Audit fieldwork is week of 21 August and 28 August. It was noted that now financial statements have been received Finance Officer can prepare the data required for the annual report to be laid at Parliament. Aim to provide in week commencing 21 July.</p> <p>ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to ask Finance Officer to provide financial information for annual report to Head of Communications.</p>	<p>NVR</p> <p>JC</p> <p>NVR</p>

4.	Governance	
	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>Head of Corporate Services has updated the risk register to create separate tabs for organisational and operational risks. SMT reviewed the risk register and approved it. Agreed key risks to be reported in the annual report and accounts.</p> <p>Internal Audit</p> <p>Head of Corporate Services tabled the internal audit plan for SMT's information. We have appointed an internal auditor on a three-year contract that covers internal audit of corporate governance, internal and external comms, financial systems related to procurement, staffing and HR, compliance with GDPR and cyber security. The internal auditor provides a report in each of these areas with recommendations of best practice. The plan contains a proposed timetable for internal audit for each of those areas and the internal audit process will start later this year.</p> <p>ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to set up a meeting with internal auditors and SMT to discuss scope and plans for internal audit before it commences later this year.</p>	NVR
5.	Delivery Plan and Projects	
	<p>Corporate Services</p> <p>No exceptions to report. Items covered under Finance and Governance.</p> <p>Strategy</p> <p>No update in absence of Head of Strategy.</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>Let's Explore Our Rights – our early years book - we will shortly have a Scots and Gaelic version, version in braille and the BSL version is complete. We have a slot at the Edinburgh Book Festival for a reading of the book.</p> <p>Our UNCRC symbols resource is being updated. We are liaising with other Commissioner's offices on this.</p>	

	<p>Advice and Investigations</p> <p>COVID Inquiry – we are finalising the witness statement. The Former Commissioner has signed it off and now need to update the references to evidence.</p> <p>Mental Health Investigation – five of our Young Advisors had a meeting with representatives from the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Scottish Government and COSLA have committed to take the recommendations from the investigation to their network meeting. The Young Advisors are also going to write to the Head of the Council in each of their local authority areas.</p> <p>Secure Unit report is nearly finalised and once finalised we will lay this with the Scottish Parliament.</p> <p>Illegal Migration Bill – waiting for Scottish Government to publish a mitigation plan which is due by the end of July.</p>	
6.	Participation	
	Updates covered at other parts of the agenda.	
7.	Onboarding and Offboarding	
	<p>Head of Corporate Services drew SMT's attention to new resources for onboarding and offboarding employees. These documents forms part of business continuity planning for processes in case the Head of Corporate Services is absent.</p> <p>SMT agreed that position remains the presumption is that new employees start at the first band of the salary scale for the grade. Exceptions to this must be approved by the Commissioner.</p>	
8.	Annual planner	
	It was agreed to postpone this agenda item to a review in a separate meeting due to time constraints on the meeting.	
9.	Music in the office	
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10.	Christmas party	

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11.	Date of next meeting: 9 August 2023	
	Summary of actions:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACTION: Breakdown of Strategy and Advice and Investigations budgets – Finance Officer and Head of Corporate Services to meet with Head of Advice and Investigations and Head of Strategy to agree level of detail which would like reported on. - ACTION: SMT to meet at end of August to discuss rephasing budget against any revised expected spend for this year. - ACTION: JC to obtain dates for retention period for Covid Inquiries from Legal Officer. All other correspondence outside of this period can be deleted. - ACTION: SMT to review and approve Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy by email. - ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to prepare three budget options and draft accompanying letter and narrative. SMT will meet to review the three options and agree its recommendation before the new Commissioner starts. - ACTION: JC to arrange meeting of SMT to discuss budget options. - ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to ask Finance Officer to provide financial information for annual report to Head of Communications. - ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to set up a meeting with internal auditors and SMT to discuss scope and plans for internal audit before it commences later this year. 	